

Neighborhood Strategy

This section identifies issues that are of concern to the residents of the SE of East Main Street neighborhood, along with potential strategies to address these concerns. The issues, which are stated in the form of "objectives", are categorized by topics that share a common concern or vision. Objectives and strategies do not necessarily correspond to any order of priority. Furthermore, it must be emphasized again that funding sources may not currently exist to implement all of these recommended objectives and strategies. Many of the recommendations contained in neighborhood plans are conceptual only and need further analysis.

Housing and Historic Preservation

SE of East Main contains several cultural and historically significant properties. Residents enjoy their old-fashioned neighborhood and want to preserve it. They also have concerns about the proliferation of rental properties and maintenance of existing apartment houses.

Objective 1: If requested by the affected property owners -- preserve and honor the culturally or historically significant properties within the neighborhood.

- Heighten awareness of culturally or historically significant properties and strive to preserve them.
- Seek official recognition (i.e., historic district designation) of the distinct characteristics of the SE of East Main Street neighborhood and its historic homes

Objective 2: Preserve the neighborhood's existing housing stock.

- Use existing programs and advocate new programs for the purpose of preserving, restoring and rehabilitating the historical integrity of housing, including rental properties, within the neighborhood.

- Maximize awareness of programs to promote home ownership.

Neighborhood Appearance

Many neighborhood residents expressed concern about the general appearance of their neighborhood. Concerns ranged from vehicles parked in yards and alleys to more trees and wildflowers along city streets. Residents also expressed concern about flooding within their neighborhood. One resident provided City staff pictures of recent flooding.

Objective 1: Encourage tree planting in the neighborhood, particularly along city streets such as 2nd Street S.E., 4th Street S.E. and Auburn Way; and require businesses to maintain the landscaping required by the City's zoning ordinance.

- Require downtown businesses and the School District to maintain the landscaping of parking lots as required by the City's zoning ordinance.
- Plant more trees along the city streets, particularly along 4th Street S.E. and 2nd Street S.E.

Objective 2: Clean-up trash and junk throughout the neighborhood.

- Organize an annual neighborhood clean-up campaign that includes the removal of junk vehicles along with other types of debris found in backyards and alleys.
- During the clean-up campaign, encourage homeowners to prune their trees and shrubs.

Objective 3: Review flooding issues and concerns.

- Review water received from SR18 that is routed through the neighborhood.

- Review areas where storm lines do not currently exist.

Crime and Public Nuisances

During neighborhood meetings residents often express concerns about public nuisances. Roughly 80% of public nuisances complaints are resolved once somebody finds out they are breaking the law. Likewise, crimes begin to disappear when residents become more vigilant and report crimes as they occur. As result residents feel safer and more secure in their neighborhood and get out to enjoy and participate in it more often.

Objective 1: Encourage residents to call 911 when witnessing illegal activities including, but not limited to, drug related incidents, illegally parked cars, and vandalism.

- Increase the number of participants involved in Neighborhood Crime Watch program.
- Encourage neighbors to get to know everyone in their block; particularly the names of children and teens.
- Incorporate planning and response to natural disasters into the Neighborhood Watch program.

Objective 2: Provide more public education about public nuisances, particularly junk vehicles and building codes.

- Publish pamphlets and fact sheets about public nuisances on the City's website.
- Include discussion and information about public nuisances when organizing neighborhood block watches and the Citizen Academy; including when it is appropriate for citizens to contact Code Enforcement.

Walkability

Several residents said what they like best about their neighborhood is it is within walking distance to downtown. They had several ideas

on how to make their neighborhood more "walkable".

Objective 1: Enhance the walkability within the neighborhood, particularly to local parks and downtown Auburn.

- Connect all the sidewalks in the neighborhood with wheelchair accessible curb cuts.
- Install new sidewalks and walking paths along 2nd Street SE and most of the north-south streets in the neighborhood.
- Enforce laws and ordinances to prohibit parking vehicles on sidewalks and walking paths.

Objective 2: Install bicycle lanes and non-motorized routes that connect the neighborhood to the Interurban, Green River and White River trails.

- Explore the feasibility of developing a bicycle trail along A Street to Lakeland and along M Street to Game Farm Park.
- Install bicycle lanes that connect M Street to Downtown Auburn and the Interurban Trail.

Objective 3: Identify and perform maintenance/replacement projects for streets, sidewalks and curbs.

- Re-paint curbs and crosswalks.

Public Services

Many residents were concerned with the way the City sweeps their streets. They suggested the City publish a schedule so that residents can temporarily relocate their automobiles to get them out of the way. They also expressed concerns about the availability and/or access to senior services.

Finally, residents complained about the noise generated by the trains that run along the southern boundary of the neighborhood. In addition to noise and vibrations from railroad operations, residents explain the noise get particularly loud when the trains are switching

cars. Potential plans to increase the number of trains that utilize the tracks will aggravate the existing problems. The City's involvement with regional and national railroad issues is limited. In the areas where the City has some influence, the City wants these concerns heard.

Objective 1: Provide opportunity for concerned residents to be informed about and become involved with state and federal plans to operate and/or upgrade the railroad and the issues of environmental mitigation that such use and upgrades generate.

- Request that studies about railroad expansion and operation include an analysis of health, human and community impacts.
- Make sure Auburn residents have meaningful involvement and participation in decisions about the railroad that affect them and their community.
- Advocate for the fair treatment of the Auburn residents who live near the railroad tracks.

Objective 2: Make available information about the City's street sweeping schedule.

- Publish the street sweeping schedule on the City's website.
- Distribute flyers that include the City's street sweeping schedule.

Objective 3: Help elderly or disabled residents maintain their property.

- Provide residents in the neighborhood information about the City of Auburn's Housing Repair Program.
- Create and maintain linkages to property maintenance efforts by non-profit agencies and faith-based communities.

Objective 4: Provide information on future projects and studies.

- Make available the traffic analysis performed for the M Street grade separation and the non-motorized chapter

of Comprehensive Transportation Plan, especially information on bike lanes.

- Consider installing curbs along J Street between Main and 2nd Street and paving alleys in the SE of East Main Street neighborhood.
- Keep residents apprised of studies, analysis and developments involving the railroad that runs their neighborhood.

Land Uses

Residents expressed concerns about both current and future land uses.

Objective 1: Ensure that land use in the SE of East Main Street Neighborhood is predictable.

- Enforce current land use codes and regulations such as home occupations, parking, signs and landscaping.

Objective 2: Encourage commercial uses and services to locate in the designated commercial or residential-office zones that support the needs of the neighborhood residents and minimize vehicular trips.

- Encourage the retention of the Residential-Office zone along East Main Street as a means to preserve historical structures and building designs.
- Encourage new construction, both commercial and residential, to compliment the neighborhood's historical building designs.
- Promote landscape buffers and fencing to separate commercial and residential land uses.

Traffic Management

A key issue facing the SE of East Main Street Neighborhood is how to manage traffic through and around their neighborhood. Several residents raised concerns including speeding cars, noisy traffic and using existing streets as major thoroughfares. Several

residents are concerned about the impact the proposed M Street railroad track grade separation will have on their neighborhood. They believe it will significantly increase the amount of traffic passing through their neighborhood. Finally, many of the streets, curbs and sidewalks that were installed decades ago are deteriorating. They will need repair and, in some cases, upgraded to meet current design standards.

Objective 1: Investigate speeding along side streets and ways to stop it.

- Implement use of speed measurement devices and increased traffic enforcement; a speed study can be done if problem persists.

Objective 2: Improve and enhance mobility through city streets and neighborhoods.

- Conduct field analysis and evaluation of problem areas with respect to poor visibility and line of sight along East Main Street, 2nd Street SE, and the corners of J, I and G Streets along with Griffith's Skating Post.
- Work with Auburn School District regarding safe walking routes to Washington Elementary.
- Explore the feasibility of various traffic calming strategies (e.g., traffic circles or speed humps) for 2nd Street SE and 4th Street S.E..

Objective 3: Provide citizens with information on SR-18 traffic volumes and associated problems.

- Keep neighborhood apprised of updates to the study examining different bypass route alternatives.
- Synchronize lights near Highway 18 along Auburn Way South at 2nd Street SE and 4th Street SE.

Open Spaces and Recreation

A number of residents said they consider Les Gove Park as their neighborhood park, which is located approximately three-quarters of a mile from the center of the neighborhood. Some residents expressed concern about the lack of open spaces to walk their dogs, shortage of indoor play areas and soccer fields.

Objective 1: Preserve and enhance existing parks and open spaces in the neighborhood.

- Support Washington Elementary School's efforts to develop a community playground/downtown park that includes a climbing wall.
- Continue to work with the Auburn School District for more frequent access to school fields and gyms.
- Renovate Veterans Memorial Park by adding additional lighting and create a theme that connects the different attractions in the park such as a walking trail, artwork, and flower gardens.
- Encourage civic groups and/or volunteers to help preserve the Veterans Memorial by helping maintain it; for example repainting it as needed.

Objective 2: Explore feasibility of developing additional parks and open spaces.

- Include the development of an off-leash area in the City's park plans.
- Continue to seek and develop areas suitable for soccer fields.

Objective 3: Improve the appearance and utility of Veteran's Memorial Park.

- Plant more wildflowers along Auburn Way and the entrance into Veteran's Memorial Park.
- Develop alternatives to serve the homeless at other locations besides Veteran's Memorial Park.